

Miscellaneous.

HOW TO GET RID OF A BIG STONE WITHOUT POWDER OR A PATENT.—A gentleman residing near our city, in a beautiful country residence, was desirous of leveling off his lawn around his house, when, such to his annoyance, his workman found a huge rock on the surface, so to render a removal of it absolutely necessary. This rock was a real hard-headed boulder, weighing perhaps several tons; if it had been only one foot lower in the earth, it would not have been an obstruction to the required level of the lawn, but how to get rid of that foot was a puzzle; to blast it was impracticable, for the house was too near. In the extremity of this perplexity, a lank, slab-sided, Yankee presented himself; and after talking with the proprietor, says he, "Squire, what will you give now, if I get that eternal rock out of your way, or as much on't as is necessary to secure your level?" "Why," says the Squire, "if you can manage to get rid of about one foot of the top of that rock without blasting, and will agree to have it done within a week, I'll give you—so much." "That's a hard bargain," says Jonathan, "to one of us, but I'll risk it." And he of facket and went to work with a spade, and before sunset of the same day he had dug a hole alongside of that rock deep enough for the purpose, and then taking a rail for a pry, he rammed it from its undermost bed holes over head into the pit—where it now lies two feet below the required level. On pocketing the sum agreed upon, says he, "Squire, I tell'd you that was a hard bargain for one of us; but seeing that I have given you a notion how to get rid of another such a critter in case you meet one in your lawn, it is almost equal to a patent right, isn't it?" And with that he bowed off and departed, leaving the gratified proprietor in admiration of that wonderful down-east mother wit, that seems ever ready to grapple with and overcome all difficulties, and in all "hard bargains" generally manages to keep on the safe side. —N. F. American.

DISSENTING COLLEGE FOR THE MIDLAND COAST.—A meeting was held at Leicester, on the 30th ult., to consider the propriety of establishing a Dissenting College in the Midland Counties, and also for the instruction of young men designed for secular purposes, against whom the Universities of the country are closed. Another frater is the founding of a class especially designed for the service of Christian missions, to the members of which it is proposed to communicate such knowledge of medicine and surgery as may qualify them to subserve the physical interests of those among whom they may labour, and at the same time to afford such a knowledge of science in general as may enable them to promote the secular and commercial as well as the spiritual interests of the people whom they may visit. Leicester has been named as the seat of the projected college. —Leicester Mercury.

SIBNEY SQUARE COLLEGE.—A correspondent states, that it has been in agitation in the borough of Richmond, Yorkshire, to take steps for the erection in the parish church there of a monument to the late Rev. James Tate, late Canon Residentiary of St. Paul's Cathedral, and for many years Master of the Free Grammar School of Richmond, and he suggests that, in lieu of a monument, there should be erected a new school-house (with an inscription upon it), in lieu of the present old and inconvenient edifice, which is situated in the parish church yard, crowded with graves. —Morning Paper.

PROPOSED AGRICULTURAL COLLEGE.—The establishment of agricultural colleges and example farms in different districts of the kingdom is at length engaging the attention of some of the leading agricultural bodies. It is proposed that in these colleges or agricultural universities, young men intended for agricultural pursuits shall pursue a course of study combined with practical illustrations of the science and practice of agriculture, so as to fit them for obtaining situations in the service of landed proprietors, be made stewards, or be enabled to carry back to their own families the principles of husbandry and farming.

REVENGEING FIRE.—A correspondent at Devonport writes that, at a fire in that town lately, it was satisfactorily proved that potash is effective in extinguishing fire. Mr. Lord, of that town, sent out a large cask of potash, and employed a person to put it into the engine, and to this circumstance it is stated, the safety of that portion of the building which remained principally attributed.

We are glad to hear that Mr. Parnell, a gentleman employed under Messrs. Sherwood, the contractors on the Paris and Northern Railway, has been presented with a tribute of esteem, in the shape of a valuable gold watch, from the Ministers of Public Works and the engineering authorities of the railway.

THE STREETS OF PARIS.—Nothing more forcibly strikes the stranger the first few days he has been in Paris, than the height of the houses and the narrowness of the streets. The houses in all the leading streets range from five to seven stories in height. In most cases they have a lively, because a very variegated appearance. Though all built of stone, the fronts are covered over with plaster of Paris, similar to the houses in Regent-street and other places in London; and have, consequently, a perfectly smooth surface. Most of them are painted in fancy colours; and as these colours not only differ on different houses, but frequently even on the front of the same house, there is something very pleasing as well as strange to the eye of a visitor in the aspect of many of the streets. I am here speaking of those streets in the most busy part of the city. In these, the very large size of the houses, and the exorbitance of the rents, render it impossible for one individual to occupy the whole of the premises. Every such house is occupied by a number of individuals; and as each individual has a right to paint the front of that part of the house which he rents in any way he pleases, that circumstance will account for the various hues which the aspect of particular houses presents. Another circumstance which gives the leading thoroughfares in Paris a peculiarly lively appearance, is the number of signs, and the variety and size of the letters. Most of these signs consist of the name and business of the parties painted, as with us, on a board which is affixed to the wall; in other cases, the letters are painted on the walls themselves—the smooth surface, to which I have already referred, being peculiarly adapted for them. The signs usually extend over the whole breadth of the front; and the gigantic proportions of the letters will be understood when I mention that they are often two feet in length and one foot in breadth. The shops are not, as with us, confined to the ground floor; many of them are on the first and second floors, to which there is access through a broad gateway from the street, and an exceedingly wide staircase. What may appear to the reader more extraordinary still, is the fact that some of the shops doing the largest amount of business in fancy articles, are situated in obscure courts and localities, up one, two, three, and sometimes even four pair of stairs. —Paris and the People.

THE UNDERSTANDING IN CHINA.—Of all the handicraft trades in China, coffin-making appears the most thriving and general. The manufacturers of them are very numerous, and the early and constant familiarization to the sight of them may be one of the causes of that great indifference to death which is so remarkable in the Chinese. Many among them have these narrow chambers for poor mortals for years in their houses, ornamented and painted, and used as chests for their clothes, linen, &c., while living. At first our brave fellows naturally felt a repugnance to disturb these wretched trunks; but accidents, on some occasions of visiting the makers of a house in one of the captured places, exposed to view the unembellished apparel of a wealthy Mandarin, thus "cribbed, coddled, and cashed"; and since that lucky discovery many others have given up their dead efforts—silks, silks, more silver, gold bars, and ornaments of jewellery sometimes, however, a corpse has been unfortunately disturbed in the too eager search for plunder!!!—From the Diary of Lieut.-Colonel Ellis, C.B., Royal Marine.

THE PYRAMIDS.—The Egyptians, according to Herodotus, hated the memory of the kings who built the pyramids. The great pyramid occupied a hundred thousand men for twenty years in its erection, without counting the workmen who were employed in hewing the stones and conveying them to the spot where the pyramid was built. Herodotus speaks of this work as a torment to the people; and doubtless, the labour engaged in raising huge masses of stone, that was extensive enough to employ a hundred thousand men for twenty years, equal to two millions of men for one year, must have been fearful for meeting. It has been calculated that the steam-engines of England, worked by thirty thousand men, would raise the same quantity of stones from the quarry and elevate them to the same height as the great pyramid, in the short space of eighteen hours.

In the course of recently pulling down the rectory, the residence of Mr. T. W. Crooks, at Bromfield, for the purpose of building a new house on the same site, an angel of fine gold, in excellent preservation, was found. It was of the coinage of Edward III., in the year 1283. On one side was the effigy of the crooked-backed usurper, and on the reverse St. George and the Dragon. It is supposed that the rectory had been built between six and seven hundred years; and it is a little singular that in pulling down an erection of so long standing, so little of interest to the antiquary should have been discovered. —Essex Standard.

LITHOGRAPHIC PORTRAITS.—An artist of very considerable talent has lately been introduced into the country under the patronage of King Leopold. His name is Baquet, and the novelty of his mode of taking portraits is this:—He draws them at once on a stone prepared for lithographic printing, and the impressions are at once made from the original drawing upon paper. By this means any person who has his portrait taken by M. Baquet can have 500, or more, impressions taken of the original, and merely for the expense of the paper and printing multiply the picture, and oblige his friends and acquaintance with a likeness. The artist has already taken the portraits of many of the Coburg family, all of which are excellent likenesses, and remarkable for correctness of drawing, spirit of outline, and preservation of intellectual character. He has also taken a likeness of Prince Albert, which is entitled to high encomium.

COLOGNE CATHEDRAL.—By strange accident, a discovery has been lately made of the original architects of Cologne Cathedral. It appears that the account-books (Schreibbücher), from the foundation of the building, are still preserved at Arnhem, where they have lately been examined by Dr. Palme, who finds the following names of architects, and dates of their superintendence:—"Heinrich Suerer, or Soryner, of Cologne (the first on the list)—1248-54. Gerard von Rile (the name of a village a little below Cologne, on the Rhine)—1254-56. Arnold—1295-1301. John, his son—1301-36." Gerard, the second on the list, has been confounded with a certain Gerard of St. Trond, a Belgian, for whom, of late, the credit of founding this magnificent edifice has been claimed by his countrymen—in error, as it now appears.

CHAIR HOOKS.—We have heard often enough of wooden boxes, iron boxes, leg bats, and the like; but it is something new and curious to hear of chair hooks! Yet the latter abound in the south of Russia, where the peasants use large blocks of ice to construct their cottages, barns, stables, &c. These erections last much longer than might have been supposed; and they are warm in winter, and impervious to the damps. The government have lately caused four boarding schools and six stables to be erected of this odd material for building, in the military settlements in the district of Kharko.

TO GIVE PLASTER FIGURES THE APPEARANCE OF MARBLE.—Put into four pounds of clear water, one ounce of pure card soap, grated and dissolved in an earthen vessel well glazed. Then add one ounce of white bees-wax, cut into thin slices; as soon as the whole is incorporated, it is fit for use. Having well dried the figure before the fire, smear it by a brush, and dip it once into the varnish; upon taking it out, the varnish will appear to have been absorbed; in two minutes, time stir the compost, and dip it a second time, and thus generally suffice. Cover it carefully from the dust for a week, then, with a soft muslin rag, or some cotton wool, rub the figure gently, when a most brilliant gloss will be produced.—From a Correspondent.

VEGETABLE COMPOST.—Half a cart, clean soil to the ton will kill all worms and weeds in compost; and this proportion will forward petrification, particularly well enabled by lime. All sorts of vegetable matter, weeds, stable, barrow-scraps, peat, bog-wood, saw-dust, refuse bark, may be heaped up, sprinkled with salt in that proportion, and as much slaked lime, and kept wet enough to ferment, and lightly covered with earth. Such a heap is conveniently made upon fields distant from the homestead, and may be quickened with dung, urine, or night soil, or animal offal of any kind.

Public attention has lately been called to a project for extending the steam-navigation in the Pacific Ocean to Panama. At present the furthest northern point touched by the Pacific Steam Navigation Company in Lima, and the effect of the extension would, it is supposed, be to bring the letters from the western coast of South America within the operation of the West India packet line. A report published by Mr. Wheelwright contains a full account of some observations made, with a view to the adoption of this project. The investigation of the coal mines in Chili and Panama seems to have been attended with very favourable results.

We understand that a patent for an invention, the work of Mr. H. R. Vale, has just passed the Great Seal, for making a new portable mosaic floor covering, which will approach the most elaborate tessellated pavements in appearance, and is constructed of a very durable material, that will retain its pattern till the last, and will be sold at a price that must bring it into general use.

The Palace of the King of Naples occupies 104 acres: Hampton Court 8 or 9; St. James's 44; and Buckingham Palace about 23 acres.

When the new works are finished, Wakefield Prison will be one of the largest in the world.